

Message Text

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ACTION EA-14

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FM AMEMBASSY SAIGON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 0442

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SAIGON 6812

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MILI PINT PINS VS

SUBJECT: SITREP FOR APRIL 19, 1973

FOLLOWING TELEGRAM RECEIVED FROM AMCONSUL CAN THO APRIL 19, 1973
REPEATED FOR YOUR INFO.

QUOTE:

C O N F I D E N T I A L CAN THO 0206

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MILI, MOPS, PINT, VS

SUBJECT: SITREP FOR APRIL 19, 1973

1. SUMMARY: VC/ NVA INITIATED INCIDENTS ROSE TO 54 AND WERE CON-
CENTRATED IN THE CHUONG THIEN AND HONG NGU AREAS. MGEN NGHI IS CON-
FIDENT HIS FORCES WILL FINISH CLEARING THE EAST BANK OF THE MEKONG
IN HONG NGU DISTRICT IN TWO MORE DAYS. THE GVN IS BUILDING NEW OUT-
POSTS AGAIN IN CHUONG THIEN TO REPLACE SEVERAL PREVIOUS SERIES OF
OUTPOSTS CLEANED OUT BY THE VC/ NVA SINCE APRIL 1972. A KIEN HOA
DISTRICT CHIEF WAS REMOVED FOR HIS INABILITY TO PREVENT LARGE SCALE
VC KIDNAPPINGS. END SUMMARY.

2. SECURITY SITUATION: (A). VC/ NVA INITIATED INCIDENTS ROSE TO
54 ON APRIL 18. THERE WERE EIGHT GROUND ATTACKS, THIRTY- SEVEN
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ATTACKS BY FIRE, EIGHT HARRASSMENTS, AND ONE TERRORIST INCIDENT. CHUONG THIEN HAD ONLY SEVENTEEN INCIDENTS, STILL THE HIGHEST PROVINCE IN THE DELTA, BUT LESS THAN THE TWENTY PLUS INCIDENT AVERAGE OF THE LAST WEEK. VC/ NVA ACTIVITY WAS CONCENTRATED IN THE TAN CHAU-HONG NGU AREA WITH A TOTAL OF FIFTEEN INCIDENTS INCLUDING FIVE ATTACKS

BY FIRE NEAR THE TAN CHAU NAVAL BASE AND THE ARVN ARTILLERY POSITION THERE AND FIVE GROUND ATTACKS IN WESTERN HONG NGU. CASUALTIES ON BOTH SIDES WERE AVERAGE.

(B). MGEN NGHI COMMANDER OF MR IV DECLARED APRIL 18 THAT HIS FORCES WILL COMPLETE THE JOB OF CLEARING OUT THE EAST BANK OF THE MEKONG IN HONG NGU DISTRICT, KIEN PHONG, WITHIN TWO MORE DAYS. THE TASK FORCE COMMANDER IS ALREADY PLANNING A VICTORY PARADE. ELEMENTS OF THE 9 TH DIVISION RECENTLY LANDED ON THE BANKS OF THE MEKONG NEAR THE CAMBODIAN

BORDER HAVE PUSHED SOUTH. AT THE SAME TIME, OTHER INFANTRY UNITS ARE PUSHING THE NVA NORTH ALONG THE MEKONG RIVER BANK AND AN ARMORED FORCE IS CLOSING IN FROM THE EAST TO ENCIRCLE VC/ NVA FORCES. MGEN NGHI SAID THAT A PRISONER DISCLOSED THAT TWO NVA BATTALION HAD RECENTLY BEEN INSERTED ALONG THE RIVER FRONT TO BOLSTER VC/ NVA POSITIONS.

TO DATE IN ITS DRIVE TO CLEAR THE RIVER BANK, THE 15 TH REGIMENT HAS LOST ALMOST EIGHTY KIA AND JUST UNDER TWO HUNDRED WIA. VC/ NVA UNITS ARE WELL DUG IN AND ARE OFFERING STIFF RESISTANCE.

(C). TAN CHAU DISTRICT IS SLOWLY RECOVERING FROM A TWO MONTH BARRAGE OF VC/ NVA ROCKETS AND MORTARS WHICH HAD SENT MOST OF THE POPULATION

FLEEING FROM THE DISTRICT TOWN. THE GVN ARTILLERY BATTERY, WHICH HAD BEEN POSITIONED INSIDE THE TOWN' S LIMITS WAS MOVED RECENTLY TO A NAVAL BASE NORTH OF TAN CHAU CITY AND THE VC/ NVA ROCKETS APPEAR TO HAVE BEEN REDIRECTED ACCORDINGLY. ABOUT FIFTY PERCENT OF THE POPULATION HAS NOW RETURNED TO TAN CHAU DISTRICT TOWN AND PEOPLE ARE

CONTINUING TO TRICKLE BACK. STORES ARE REOPENING AND LIFE IS BEGINNING TO RETURN TO NORMAL.

(D). IN CHUONG THIEN, VC UNIT COMMANDERS REPORTEDLY COMPLETED A MEETING ABOUT TEN DAYS AGO AND THERE ARE SIGNS THAT THE VC ARE PREPARING A NEW CAMPAIGN AGAINST RVNAF OUTPOSTS. THEIR ATTACKS MAY BE CONCENTRATED ALONG THE LONG MY- VI THANH AND VI THANH- THUAN NHON AXES. SENIOR ARVN COMMANDERS IN CHUONG THIEN DISCOUNT THE POSSIBILITY

OF A RENEWED GENERAL OFFENSIVE IN THE CHUONG THIEN AREA BUT BELIEVE VC/ NVA UNITS WILL STRIVE HARD TO REMOVE SELECTED AND STRATEGICALLY LOCATED RVNAF OUTPOSTS. MEANWHILE THE 31 ST ARVN REGIMENT OF THE CONFIDENTIAL

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21 ST DIVISION CONTINUES TO OPERATE IN THE TWIN RIVER AREA OF KIEN THIEN DISTRICT WHERE THEY WERE INSERTED A WEEK AGO. GVN HAS ALSO RE- ESTABLISHED A LARGE RF OUTPOST AT THE CONFLUENCE OF THE TWIN RIVERS IN AN EFFORT TO INTERDICT VC SUPPLY LINES. GVN HAS SET UP BASE AREAS IN THIS LONG CONTESTED LOCATION IN THE PAST, ONLY TO BE DRIVEN OUT BY THE VC/ NVA.

3. COMMUNIST ACTIVITY: (A). VC TAX COLLECTORS IN VINH BINH ARE STILL FOLLOWING THEIR POST- CEASEFIRE POLICY O
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